

Kaua‘i National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge



Hanalei NWR lo‘i kalo and wetland management units

Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), established in 1972, is the oldest of Kaua‘i's three refuges within the Kaua‘i National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Hanalei NWR was established under the Endangered Species Act to recover threatened and endangered species, including the koloa maoli or Hawaiian duck (*Anas wyvilliana*), ‘alae ke‘oke‘o or Hawaiian coot (*Fulica alai*), ‘alae ‘ula or Hawaiian moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus sandvicensis*), ae‘o or Hawaiian stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) and Hawaiian goose or nēnē (*Branta sandvicensis*). The 917-acre refuge was purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from the Eagle County Development Corporation with Land and Water Conservation Funds. The Refuge is located within a proposed State Historic and Conservation District, and is also home to the Haraguchi Rice Mill which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service manages the Refuge to:

- 1) Protect and enhance Hawaiian waterbird populations and provide high quality nesting and feeding habitat; 2) Protect and enhance the native plant community and riverine ecosystem; and
- 3) Provide opportunities for wildlife observation, interpretation, and environmental education.

The Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge is located in a relatively flat river valley ranging from 20-40 feet above sea level surrounded by steep, wooded hillsides up to 1,000 feet high. The annual rainfall usually exceeds 75 inches. At the southeastern end of the Refuge, water from the Hanalei River is diverted into irrigation ditches, which feed the lo‘i kalo (taro fields) and managed wetlands.

There has been wetland agriculture in the Hanalei Valley for more than 1,200 years. Traditional kalo farming practices help maintain waterbird feeding and nesting areas, in conjunction with Service managed wetlands. Kalo farming is managed through a special use permit, which is renewed annually.

A draft Wetland Management and Waterbird Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge is scheduled to be released for public comment in mid-August of 2020. Through the planning process, we are looking at ways to improve Refuge habitat for priority listed species; fill knowledge gaps through targeted monitoring and research; and improve current farming practices and relations to ensure a more sustainable holistic approach which benefits the listed birds on the Refuge. The focus of the plan is to fulfill the Refuge purpose by providing quality habitat that meets the life-history requirements of these species, improving water quality, and reducing the likelihood of avian botulism outbreaks.

Hanalei wetlands are closed to the public to protect the federally listed waterbirds and sensitive habitat. Limited access is allowed along Ohiki Road, and a small parking area is open to support the State-managed ‘Ōkolehao Trail. Interpretive signs are located at the Hanalei Valley overlook across from the Princeville Shopping Center.



Photo courtesy: Hob Osterlund



**NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGE SYSTEM**